

on how to do that. The half-baked plan being touted in the Senate fundamentally misses the goal here, which is to strengthen Social Security.

Mr. Speaker, the American people are not fools. They have rejected the President's proposal for privatization, and they will undoubtedly reject this new proposal. People like the security that comes with Social Security.

GUANTANAMO BAY PRISONERS EAT WELL

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, pancakes with syrup, whole wheat bagels, scrambled eggs. That is not what I had for breakfast this morning, but there is a good chance that the terrorist prisoners at Guantanamo Bay were eating this morning. And it is not something that prisoners held by the Nazis, the Soviets, Pol Pot, or any other despot would eat.

Yet some on the other side of the aisle have advocated closure of the prison at Guantanamo Bay. The prison there has held 800 suspected al Qaeda and Taliban terrorists; 235 have already been released; 61 are awaiting release or transfer.

The information shared by these prisoners has saved countless lives here and around the world. We go to great lengths to ensure proper treatment of detainees. In addition to good meals, we take care to offer the freedom of worship freely, like supplying copies of the Koran and prayer rugs. Each person is treated according to the Geneva Convention, though none of these prisoners meets the qualifications of soldiers under that treaty.

The left is content to criticize and demagogue, but Gitmo is a part of the war on terror. And as long as it stands, the soldiers there will be treated properly. That is more than I can say for dozens of prisoners executed by al Qaeda in the past.

BRING OUR TROOPS HOME

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, two reports from today's New York Times which prove why we need to continue to move in the direction of bringing our troops home from Iraq: The first, a new classified assessment by the Central Intelligence Agency says Iraq may prove to be an even more effective training ground for Islamic extremists than Afghanistan was in al Qaeda's early days, because it is serving as a real-world laboratory for urban combat. The report goes on to say that officials have said Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and other countries would soon have to contend with militants who leave Iraq equipped with considerable experience and training.

The next report says the following: that Iraqi rebels are refining bomb skills and pushing the G.I. toll even higher. Improvised explosive devices are now sufficiently sophisticated to destroy armored Humvees. That means our soldiers are more vulnerable and that casualty rates will go higher than ever.

It is time to bring our troops home. Support House Joint Resolution 55, a bipartisan bill to bring our troops home.

THE PRIORITY FOR THIS NATION

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, this is the 68th session day that we have had in this 109th Congress. We have passed bankruptcy reform, class action reform, an aggressive agenda, and many of the Democrats are voting for this agenda.

And today we are continuing to move forward with an appropriations bill. We are going to be passing the Labor, HHS, and Education appropriations bill. And I would like to take a moment to commend the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. REGULA), subcommittee chairman, and the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS), the Committee on Appropriations chairman, on a provision in this bill. This bill will do something we have talked about doing a lot: reducing spending, prioritizing. Fifty-six programs will be terminated, programs that have outlived their usefulness. It will be a \$3.8 billion savings for the taxpayers.

And why do we have our focus on priorities? Why does this majority have its focus on priorities? Because we know funding the war on terror, keeping this homeland safe, preserving freedom, is the priority for this great Nation.

I commend the leadership for their good work. I look forward to the debate on this bill.

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE CONGRESSMAN JAKE PICKLE

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to pay tribute to the late Congressman Jake Pickle, who will be funeralized today in Austin, TX. What a giant. What a generous spirit. What an outstanding patriot and leader. And I am grateful that he served the people of Texas and the United States of America.

Yes, he was someone who had the common touch. In fact, many would speak of his travels from Washington to Austin where he worked the airplane aisles to shake hands with all the constituents and others who were flying back and forth with him.

He was committed to justice in this country and made a powerful vote

when he voted for the 1964 Civil Rights Act. He made it out of conscience and passion and what was right.

And then I think what he thought was his greatest achievement because of his common touch, he helped fix Social Security in the right way, in a bipartisan manner, and had it to last for 40 and 50 years.

We are grateful for his life and my deepest sympathy to his family and friends. But all we can say today is farewell to our friend. We thank him for his service. We thank him for being a great patriot. We thank him for loving America and thank him for loving Texas.

THE WRIGHT AMENDMENT

(Mr. BURGESS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, almost 3 decades ago, the cities of Dallas and Fort Worth came together and made an historic agreement to have one regional airport. This local agreement was codified by congressional action known as the Wright amendment.

There are those in Congress today who now seek to repeal the Wright amendment. But, Mr. Speaker, it is my belief that if there is a change to occur to that agreement that it should come from the local level and not from Washington. I think the mayors and county officials on both sides of the Trinity River should make this decision, and if they come to us, if they propose a change to the agreement, then and only then should Congress become involved.

Our community in North Texas is fortunate to have two thriving airports. We serve millions of satisfied customers and employ hundreds of thousands of North Texans. We should not jeopardize that which is working well already.

As a Republican, I am all for competition. But as a Republican, I am also for local control, and I do not believe in a Washington top-down approach to problems. And, finally, as a Republican, I believe it is important to keep our word and keep our covenant, and that is exactly what we should do with the Wright amendment today.

WHY AN INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION IS NEEDED

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, last week the Iraqi Bureau Chief for Newsweek Magazine left Iraq after being there for 2 years and wrote one final report entitled "Good Intentions Gone Bad." Rod Nordland said the turning point in the war was the Abu Ghraib scandal. Nordland wrote: "The abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib alienated a broad swath of the Iraqi public. There is no evidence that all the mistreatment and